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RURAL REHABILITATION AND RURAL RESETTLEMENT

REGION VI

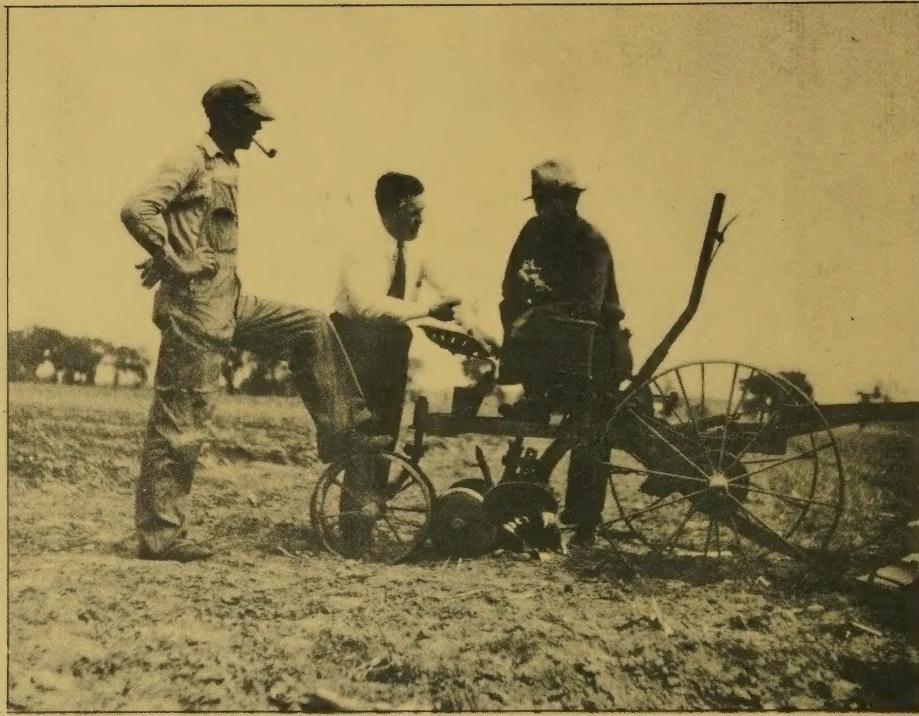
ARKANSAS - MISSISSIPPI - LOUISIANA

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
RESETTLEMENT ADMINISTRATION

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LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS

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THE R. A. HELPS THE FARMER TO RAISE HIS NET CASH INCOME THROUGH GIVING ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE. HERE A RURAL REHABILITATION SUPERVISOR IS DISCUSSING FARM PROBLEMS WITH A FARMER.



THIS ARKANSAS FARM WOMAN WAS CANNED THE FOOD SHOWN IN THIS PICTURE AT THE ADVICE AND SUGGESTION OF THE REHABILITATION SUPERVISOR. AS A RESULT THIS FAMILY WILL ENJOY A BETTER AND MORE VARIED DIET THAN IT MIGHT OTHERWISE HAVE.

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RURAL RESETTLEMENT

Rural resettlement is but a small part of the work of the Resettlement Administration, but there is a great deal of public misunderstanding about it. It is often confused with

RURAL REHABILITATION

This is a very simple and effective program which has little to do with moving farm families and nothing to do with buying them farm homes. Rural rehabilitation families stay "in place" and are helped where they are with small supervised loans. Were it not for these loans many of these families would have been on direct relief and a charge on the local communities where they are located.

To qualify as a rural rehabilitation client a farmer must be unable to secure credit from any other source, either governmental or private agency. Furthermore, his eligibility and qualifications are approved by a local committee.

Three-fourths of all the money spent by the Resettlement Administration goes for this purpose. More than 30,000 farm families in Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi are being helped in this way, whereas to date no more than 400 families in the region are taking part in the *rural resettlement* program. From this, one can see how small rural resettlement is as compared with rural rehabilitation.

These small loans to rural rehabilitation clients are, for the most part, "character loans". The Resettlement Administration has been successful in handling these loans because the credit is supervised. In the first place, the loans are limited to an amount that can be repaid from the income of the farm on which the family lives. Secondly, the borrowing farmer is helped to plan and execute a sound farm program. The "live at home" part of the program is emphasized.

The soundness of this policy of supervised credit has been demonstrated in several ways. The families have been kept off relief, their morale has been either bolstered or restored, they are not a burden to their community. They live much better than they ever did before. They have advanced a rung on the agricultural ladder. Finally, they are repaying their loans to the Resettlement Administration.

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RESETTLING FAMILIES

Rural resettlement is a relatively limited activity of the Resettlement Administration because, since it has to do with land planning and with home ownership, it is necessarily slow.

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The Resettlement Administration is not going to resettle every farm family who does not now own a farm. There are 477,700 such families in Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi, and such a program would require 25,000,000 acres of land. It is not going to resettle all of the 33,000 rural rehabilitation clients in the three states. Only about 11 per cent of these are now *qualified* for farm ownership, and you may be sure the Resettlement Administration is not going to select any families for resettlement until it has been proved beyond reasonable doubt that they are potential home owners. It is not even going to try to resettle all of the qualified families who apply. It does not have that much money.

* * *

The rural resettlement division of the Resettlement Administration has purchased enough productive land in this region for about 3,000 farm units. This land has been very carefully selected. The location has been approved by the State Land Planning Boards. The land has been appraised by an independent land appraisal unit of the Land Use Division of the Resettlement Administration. All land has been bought for the appraised price or less. This appraisal is much the same as that made by the Federal Land Bank in making loans. It is estimated that 90 per cent of the land acquired to date for resettlement purposes has been bought from absentee owners. Some of the land is in large tracts which will be divided into family-sized farms. Some of it consists of small farms of family size located in going communities. Briefly, the plans for resettlement of this land are as follows:

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Any family of the low income group with a distinct farm background which has been actively engaged in farming for the last five years is eligible. Thus, it can be seen that the selection of families is not limited to rural rehabilitation families. Any farm family of the low income group may be selected. This means simply that the family must be a good moral risk and must not already own land.

SELECTING FAMILIES

The procedure for selecting families for rural resettlement is as follows:

The family is referred to the Resettlement Administration by some individual living in the community. This suggestion may come from any interested person. So far most of the families in this region have been suggested by the County Agent, the Home Demonstration Agent, the County Rural Supervisor, or some interested local citizen.

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When the reference is made, regardless of its source, a check is very quietly made into the possibilities of the family for resettlement. It is also determined whether the members of the family are interested in resettlement.

If, after the investigation, it is believed the family has possibilities and is interested, the case is referred to a local committee. This committee is made up of public spirited individuals who volunteer their services, take their responsibility seriously and make a real contribution to the resettlement program.

If the county committee approves, the name of the family is given to a family selection specialist employed by the Resettlement Administration. The specialist visits the family, visits its neighbors, the landlord if there is one, the merchants with whom the family has dealt, the family physician, and anyone else whose knowledge and opinion of the family under consideration may be deemed valuable in arriving at a decision.

* * *

After this investigation, there is little about the family that is not known. If the family passes this test, the name is given to the project manager of the farm or farms available for resettlement. The man and his wife visit the project and confer with the manager. If the family heads are favorably impressed with the possibilities, and the project manager is favorably impressed with the family, the individual farm is selected from those available. A medical examination of the family is made by a doctor whose services are paid for by the Resettlement Administration, and the man and his wife go home.

As soon thereafter as possible, if the members of the family have met all requirements to date -- mentally, physically, morally and otherwise -- they receive notice that they have been accepted insofar as the Resettlement Administration is concerned.

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The family is given a week in which to accept or decline the offer. If it is accepted, the family moves onto the farm as soon as possible and a definite farm program is worked out. The farm program is made in detail and conforms to the recommendations of the Agricultural Extension Service of the College of Agriculture in the state where the project is located. Considerable emphasis is placed on the live-at-home phase of this program.

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PURCHASE PLANS

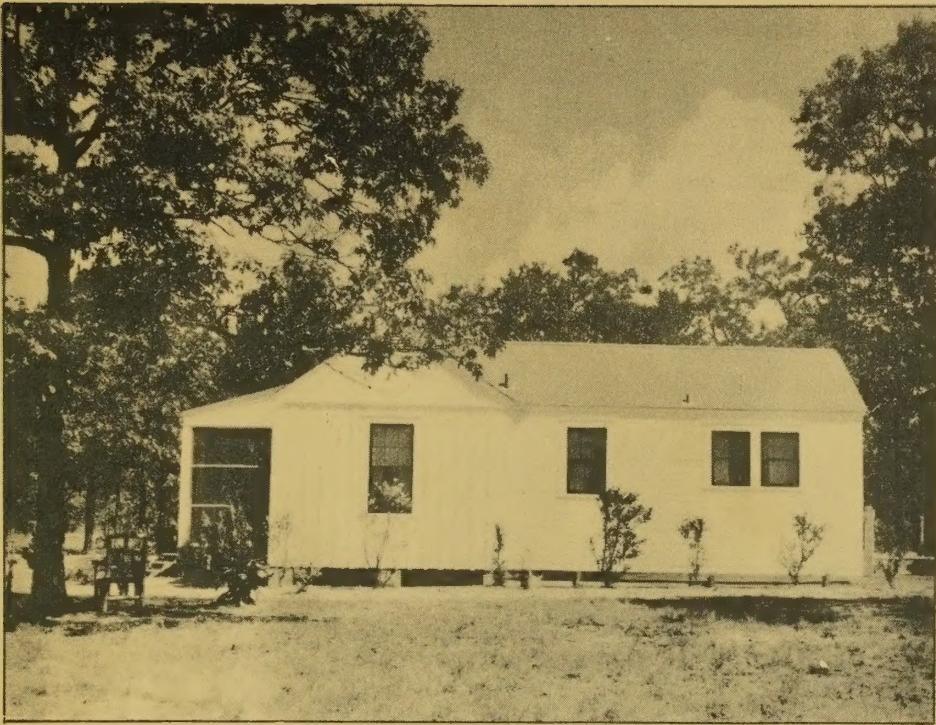
Each family will be given what is commonly referred to as a family-sized farm. The acreage will depend upon the productivity of the land, the size of the family, the type of farming to be done and other factors. In any event the number of acres will be sufficient to keep the available labor in the family occupied for the maximum length of time throughout the year when using conservative, present day, improved farm implements. The size of the farm and the crops planted will be so planned as to keep the family busy, but at the same time guard against the evils of over-cropping, the necessity for hiring outside labor, and the periods when no productive labor is available.

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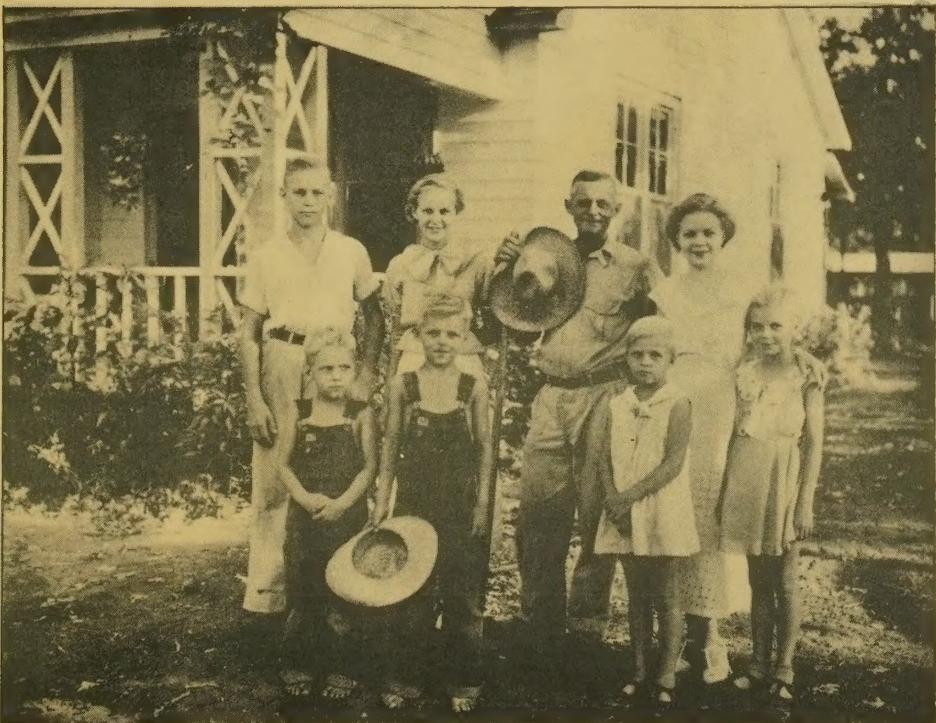
The family will be given a definite contract as a renter for a five year period. As nearly as possible, the rent charged will be identical to that paid by other renters in the same community for the same kind of a farm.

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During this five year period the family will have an opportunity and will be encouraged to accumulate enough money to make a down payment at the end of the period of about 15 per cent of the purchase price of the unit. For failure to measure up to the opportunity or failure to live up to the contract, the family can be dispossessed at the end of any crop year.



THIS HOUSE IS ONE OF A GROUP CONSTRUCTED BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT;
IT IS LOCATED ON RESETTLEMENT'S MAGNOLIA HOMESTEADS
PROJECT, MEREDIAN, MISS.



HERE IS A RESETTLED FARMER AND HIS FAMILY;
DYESS COLONY, ARKANSAS.

The plan calls for the organization of a homestead association under the laws of the state. The associations will be title holding agencies, properly safeguarded, for the Resettlement Administration. They will pay the usual taxes on the land, in the same amount that would be required if the title rested in a private owner.

No sales price will be placed on any farm before the end of the five year period. Accurate production records will be kept throughout these years. Hence, it will be a comparatively easy matter to appraise each farm unit for sales purpose on a basis of the actual money-producing ability of the farm. No farm will be sold for a greater price than this five-year production record would indicate that it is worth.

In this connection there is one important fact not generally realized by the public. That is the fact that all money spent on construction by the Resettlement Administration has been money voted by the Congress to relieve the unemployment situation.

As a matter of fact, any money spent for WPA labor and eventually recovered by the Resettlement Administration will be just that much relief money returned to the United States Treasury. This money would not return to the Treasury if spent on many other worthwhile projects.

In short, the construction of houses on resettlement projects to date has been designed to give work to unemployed people as well as to resettle farm families.

LAND UTILIZATION

The third major activity of the Resettlement Administration in this region is the land use program. This is seldom confused with the rural resettlement program. Its only connection with rural resettlement is that the families living on the areas that are being retired from agriculture are considered for farm ownership and, also, that this division approves the resettlement areas and approves and limits the price to be paid for each farm bought.

For further information write - U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
RESETTLEMENT ADMINISTRATION - INFORMATION DIVISION
LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS